

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CORRECTION PARA 5 GARBLED)

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TAGS: PARM, MNUC, KS, CA, FR

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

REF: A. SEOUL 0026 B. STATE 305630 C. STATE 302043

D. STATE 06731

1. ON RECEIPT REF D JANUARY 12, I IMMEDIATELY ARRANGED TO SEE PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY GENERAL KIM CHONG-YOM AND MET HIM THIS AFTERNOON (JANUARY 12). KIM, AS PREVIOUSLY, HAD PRESIDENTIAL INTERPRETER CHOI KWANG-SOO SIT IN TO INSURE AGAINST ANY MISUNDERSTANDING BASED ON LANGUAGE.

2. AT ONSET OF MEETING I SET FORTH US POSITION AS CONTAINED TALKING POINTS PARA SIX REF D. THE ONLY ADDITIONAL POINT MADE WAS TO MENTION THAT ACCORDING TO MY BRITISH COLLEAGUE IN SEOUL BRITISH LOAN, WHICH INTEGRAL ASPECT OF KORI II, COULD VERY WELL BE JEOPARDIZED BY DELAY IN COMPLETION US LOAN. (I PICKED UP THIS INFORMATION JUST VERY RECENTLY.) I ALSO MADE VERY GLANCING REFERENCE TO CANADIAN PROBLEM. PRESENTATION STRESSED REQUEST FOR CANCELLATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND MADE CLEAR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS AFTER PRELIMINARY TALKS CONTINGENT ON CANCELLATION. AT SAME TIME I POINTED UP USG WILLINGNESS COME AT LEAST HALF WAY BY SENDING QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NOW AT EARLY DATE FOR PRELIMINARY TALKS EVEN BEFORE CANCELLATION.

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3. KIM OPENED RESPONSE BY REITERATING KOREAN POSITION THAT, WHILE IT STILL CONSIDERED PURCHASE OF REPROCESSING FACILITY JUSTIFIED AND FULLY SAFEGUARDED, ROKG WILLING TO RECONSIDER GIVEN US POSITION AND ITS UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH US PROVIDED ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS WITH US MET KOREAN REQUIREMENTS ON PEACEFUL USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, INCLUDING THOSE ON REPROCESSING. HE THEN WELCOMED AND EXPRESSED FULL APPRECIATION OF USG DECISION TO SEND QUALIFIED EXPERTS.

4. KIM SAID ROKG PREPARED TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS IMMEDIATELY. MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CHOI HAS COMPLETED STUDIES AND HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS ROKG REPRESENTATIVE FOR SUCH DISCUSSIONS. HE IS PREPARED TO MEET WITH US GROUP FOR DISCUSSIONS AND ALSO TO GO TO US FOR FURTHER TALKS.

5. WHEN I POINTED OUT AGAIN FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WOULD DEPEND UPON ROKG CANCELLATION OF REPROCESSING ASPECT OF FRENCH CONTRACT, KIM RESPONDED THAT HE EXPECTED SINGLE DISCUSSION WOULD NARROW MUCH OF THE DIFFERENCES, BUT FURTHER DISCUSSIONS MAY BE NEEDED IN WASHINGTON IF THERE IS NOT FULL SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS. ROKG CONSIDERS THAT FULL DISCUSSIONS ARE NECESSARY EVEN THOUGH IT WILL TAKE LONGER TIME. IT RECOGNIZES THAT KORI II LOAN COULD BE JEOPARDIZED AND IT FULLY UNDERSTANDS AND APPRECIATES US POSITION AND DECISION. NEVERTHELESS, ROKG CANNOT ACCEPT SINGLE ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS AS BASIS FOR DECISION TO CANCEL REPROCESSING CONTRACT, ASSUMING ALL PROBLEMS ARE NOT SOLVED, SINCE THIS PROCEDURE WOULD BE CONTRARY TO FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND ROKG.

6. KIM AT SAME TIME URGED THAT DISCUSSIONS TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, "THE SOONER THE BETTER," WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF REACHING SOLUTION SOONEST. HE REITERATED HIS CONFIDENCE THAT THESE DISCUSSIONS WOULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM VERY QUICKLY. SUBSEQUENTLY HE AGAIN PRESSED FOR COMMENCING DISCUSSIONS SOONEST, WHEN I REITERATED USG POSITION ON FURTHER DISCUSSIONS.

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7. COMMENT: WHILE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT AT THIS STAGE CANCELLATION OF FRENCH CONTRACT AS PRICE FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS, IT CLEAR FROM KIM'S ANXIETY TO COMMENCE PRELIMINARY ROUND THAT PRESSURES ON ROKG ARE BEGINNING TO TAKE THEIR TOLL AND THEY ARE AS ANXIOUS AS WE ARE TO AVOID PROTRACTED PERIOD OF BARGAINING. I WOULD THEREFORE URGE THAT WE SEND WASHINGTON GROUP TO SEOUL DURING SECOND HALF OF JANUARY AS SOON AS FEASIBLE. I WILL BE OUT OF

SEOUL DURING MOST OF THIS PERIOD AT CHIEFS OF MISSION
CONFERENCE. WHILE I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO BE PRESENT DURING
VISIT SINCE I HAVE PERSONALLY CARRIED BULK OF BURDEN OF
DISCUSSIONS ON NUCLEAR REPROCESSING, IT IS STILL FAR MORE
PREFERABLE TO BEGIN THEM SOONEST. IF FEASIBLE I WOULD LIKE TO
ARRANGE TO MEET WITH GROUP IN HONOLULU EN ROUTE TO SEOUL.

8. WHILE ROKG POSITION STILL FALLS SHORT OF OUR DESIRES,
IT WILL BE POSSIBLE DURING VISIT TO INCREASE THE PRESSURES
FOR CANCELLATION WHILE MAKING CLEAR FURTHER TALKS CONTINGENT
UPON CANCELLATION. US POSITION ON FURTHER TALKS SHOULD AGAIN BE
EMPHASIZED WHEN WE PROVIDE DATES OF WASHINGTON GROUP
VISIT.
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